1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

practically impossible since it meant rejecting your own superiors, not your job, and it would be similar to someone in a household saying he was fed up when he decided to leave. Thus in Kanuri cultural terms, changing a job means rejecting the people with whom one works, and young men claim they would be considered ingrates and trouble-makers if they were to attempt such a thing. Transfers, if they are to be accomplished at all, must be done through relatives and friends who can "visit at night" with the appropriate people and explain the ins and outs of the case so that things can be arranged on this personal basis first before any impersonal bureaucratic procedures are utilized.

On the surface the emirate civil service looks very westernized. There are offices, typewriters, clerks, officials, expense vouchers, committees, memoranda, telephones, employee organizations, etc. However within the service, traditional patterns of association are still very strongly observed. A man lifts the telephone and traditional greetings and modes of address to a superior flow forth and color the conversation. People leave their shoes outside a superior's office, and so on. Under these superficial cultural acts there are other things as well. "Big men" (senior officials) have large compounds linked to a number of clients who live either in their households or close by. Some of these subordinates have positions in the civil service. Others form part of this big man's own group of followers; he must be approached through this group and he uses it to maintain his position and prestige in the state. It is also important to understand that the western concept of loyalty to an ideal of public service is not widespread as yet. Top leaders are committed to the maintenance of order in a just society that is becoming more modern. Within the Native Authority, department loyalties are to one's superiors and personal advancement is through loyalty and generalized obedience, just as it always has been in Kanuri society, and not to an abstract ideal of public service and bureaucratic efficiency. This does not mean that rationalized bureaucratic behavior will not become more common in Bornu. Indeed everything we know about modernization suggests that this is inevitable. However, it does mean that at present the society is not divided into strict sectors, one labelled modern or western, the other traditional. Instead, each of these permeates the other so that everything new and modern is shot through with traditional culture, and everything traditional has aspects of the modern.

Representative Government

For most intents and purposes the political organization of the emirate is carried out within the system of offices and agencies described above. However there are today the bare bones of some other kinds of organization that are quite likely to prove important in the future. During the 1950s and continuing on to the present time, each district has had a local district council. This body is made up of members from all over the district, sometimes the village area heads, sometimes people appointed by them. They meet only a few times a year for one or two days under the chairmanship of the district head and discuss local affairs. These meetings are generally attended as well by members of the departments of local government from the capital. The councils have a budget based on a small proportion of

627 is still widely practiced. If a man's decisions are just and people trust him, they will come to him for sholo. If he is not trusted, if he is feared or disliked, people will not bring 627 cases for him to hear. In one situation mentioned, the Lowan 663 of a town hears many cases and receives large amounts in wushira, 661 because he is wise and knows how to deal with people and resolve disputes. The Ajia of that district, who lives in the same town, does very little sholo because he is not tactful, loses his temper, and shouts a good deal. Should people suspect that a Lowan or an Ajia is taking bribes, they will cease to bring their disputes before him. The essence of sholo is that it represents a voluntary action on the part of disputants who wish to have a conflict resolved. The mediator is a person in authority, who is obligated to rule justly by virtue of his position. Should he misuse his position by taking bribes, he would violate the expectations of those beneath him, and they, by ceasing to bring cases to him for sholo, would prevent him from performing one of the most important roles of someone in his position. Giving of kafelo, therefore, is a recognition [83] [85] of the status of the man hearing the case, and is quite different from a bribe.

627 Yerima hears fifteen or twenty cases each week in which 431 he gives sholo. If mediation is impossible, he will send the [67] case to court. To have a case brought before Yerima, the complainant gives several shillings to his wakil. Yerima is never given money directly, but money collected by the wakil is turned

627 431 over to Yerima. Though the wakil or any kabuna may bring a case before Yerima, kafélo is presented solely to the wakil. Yerima denies that he exacts wushira after ruling in a case of sholo, but he admits to receiving kafelo beforehand. He states that kafelo often is in the form of bowls of millet, which he refers to as nasha (gifts); other informants say that kafelo to hear a case must be in hard cash.

627 578 Many of the cases brought before Yerima for sholo involve marital disputes. Where husband and wife are prepared to reconcile their differences, and seek merely to have an authority hear one another's promises not to repeat the things which caused conflict, sholo is effective. Where neither party is prepared to be reconciled, sholo cannot be effective, and the dispute is sent to court. Yerima rarely brings out his Koran for formal swearing. It is usually sufficient for a person to say that he is willing to swear on the Koran--the husband is willing to swear that he will never again beat his wife, the wife in turn is willing to swear that she never again will curse her husband. Sholo is doubly important in Geidam because the Ajia and the Alkali are extremely close, and work effectively together. Yerima sees their cooperation as a virtue. If he is aware of information which the Alkali should know in order to make a proper decision, he informs the Alkali. In turn, it is clear that Yerima's influence with the Alkali can potentially disrupt the course of true justice, might even be used for individual ends by others. Few Ajias are as close with their

627 663 664

[GEIDAM]

627 663 661 Alkalis as Yerima is with Alkali Baba Kura, but Yerima would put his influence to use only when affairs arise which directly concern him.

627 829 671 In the eyes of talaka, sholo is the major means for keeping the peace. They do not distinguish sharply between the resolution of conflicts through sholo and through judgments handed down in the courtroom. The Kanuri do not conceive of an impartial legal system which grants all individuals equal protection. Law is conceived of as mediation granted by particular individuals, some more trustworthy than others. Whether one brings one's complaint before the Ajia, the Alkali, or the Lowan depends on whether one has greater trust in the Ajia, the Alkali, or the Lowan. In any case, one brings one's complaint to be heard by a single man, with his particular whims, idiosyncracies and prejudices, and one chooses the man in whom one has the greatest confidence. According to the British view, sholo given by an Ajia or Lowan is not permitted,and is therefore not binding on the parties involved. A man who has received an unfavorable decision in sholo can complain to the court and the decision will be overruled. The Ajia or Lowan who heard the case will have difficulty because of it. This rarely happens because the talaka sees the situation from an entirely different viewpoint. When he brings a case for sholo and receives an adverse ruling, the dispute must end there as he has done everything possible for him to do in the situation, particularly if no bribes have been given (to his knowledge)

627 829 671 and he has had an opportunity to present his side of the dispute. If he feels that the mediator has been bribed and the [626] case has not been properly handled, he knows that he must never bring a case for sholo before that Ajia or Lowan again and he will let his relatives, friends, and neighbors know what occurred. If a decision has been against him, and he has no reason to suspect that it was not fairly given, then he cannot take the case for further sholo, since his case has already been decided. Taking his case before the Alkali would be to take it once again for sholo, and if he had trusted the Alkali more than he did the Lowan who originally gave sholo in the case, he would have brought his complaint directly to the Al- [693] kali in the first place. In addition, the court exacts wushira from the winner, more than is paid in sholo, as well as other fees paid to police who bring in witnesses, and to court appointed assessors of property, in property disputes.

4. Taxation and the role of kabuna.

663 651 The two primary responsibilities of a Kanuri political official are to properly administer his territory and to collect taxes. The first duty involves the handling of disputes and [545] maintaining adequate control over subordinates. So long as the traditional social system remains in effect, each class of individual will know its place, talaka will come to those in authority for sholo, subordinates will fear and respect their superiors, and those in power will not usurp their power by unduly exploiting the populace.

[GEIDAM]

651 increase of 6,000 cows. The tax figures for Geidam District
634 in 1956 are as follows:
[652]

village jangali - 30,000 cows			
nomad jangali - 39,000 cows	taxes collected =	£	17,500
road and market jangali			3,000
haraji			41,000
total taxes		£	61,500

Geidam is a large, populous district and the sums involved in
[433] tax collection are correspondingly large. Because Geidam has a large farming population, it has less bush area to accommodate nomadic Fulani and the number of cows on which nomadic jangali
651 is collected is smaller than in Magumeri District. Yerima
634 Mustapha's approach to jangali collection is to reconcile two
563 seemingly conflicting goals. On the one hand he attempts to attract Fulani Ardos into his district; on the other hand he attempts to collect jangali for every single cow within the district. Digma, the Ajia of Magumeri District, doesn't try to attract Fulani into his district, nor can he collect jangali for all the cows already there, though he tours a great deal and covers much of the area himself, which Yerima does not do.

651 The contrast presented by the two Ajias, Yerima and Dig-
634 ma, is enlightening. From the point of view of the British,
• 663 Yerima does an excellent job in administering his district, and
156 in particular in collecting taxes. The amount which Yerima
[648] brings in to the NA treasure is steadily increasing, and there is no reason for investigating his methods as there are no complaints. Yerima organizes his kabuna, who do the actual work of collecting taxes. Yerima himself does not perform the physi-

651 cal labor involved. Digma, on the other hand, has moved into
634 the district which Yerima left, so that the contrast between
663 the two is particularly marked. Taxes have constantly been
156 declining in his district, and he is continually suspected of embezzling tax money--otherwise how else can one explain the meager sums brought in from such a prosperous district? The threat of investigation and dismissal hovers over Digma, a [208] nervous and suspicious man to begin with. He is not liked in his district, is not a generous man, and has few kabuna under him. Consequently he is driven to go out and to collect the taxes himself, but the job is far more than one man could ever accomplish and he has only increased worries to show for his efforts. Every failure of Digma's recalls the memory of Yerima, who was respected and liked, who was generous, and who per-
634 formed so well as Ajia. Yerima's success in this as in so
663 many things derives from his keen insight into the traditional
554 social structure and his ability to adapt and use traditional
156 means to achieve his ends. The manner in which he maintains a large corps of kabuna, many of them slaves, and uses their services to his advantage while at the same time fulfilling all the obligations of a great aristocrat, are an illustration of this. Digma on the other hand is unable to act the part of a traditional aristocrat, and constantly lives in fear of those above him.

651 One way of handling the problem of inducing Fulani Ardos
634 to come into a district while at the same time taxing their
563
662

and Yerima has actually carried out the threat often enough for all to know that he means business. It is much wiser and easier to compromise, and to receive gifts for having compromised, than to curry the Ajia's disfavor. In this way Yerima maintains harmonious relations with the Fulani in his district, and indeed with the Kanuri villagers as well, and satisfies the demands of the central authorities at the same time. The system is dependent on the work of Yerima's kabuna, who in turn are supported by Yerima. Ultimately funds to support Yerima's sixty odd kabuna come from tax funds, though this never appears in the accounting of taxes. Absolute loyalty to Yerima is demanded of all his kabuna. A kabuna found helping himself from jangali, or using his position to extract money from villagers for himself, is severely dealt with.

5. The Roles of N.A. Personnel.

The roles of a number of political figures have been discussed in some detail above. In particular, the roles of Ajia and kabuna, of Lowan, and of Alkali have been examined and in every case it can be seen that traditional Kanuri roles have persisted into the present. The smooth functioning of the political system of Geidam has been attributed to the ability of individuals carrying out those roles, particularly of Yerima Mustapha, in perpetuating traditional relationships and adapting those relationships to the changing present.

However, in looking at the list of office-holders in Gei-